DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 287 058 CE 048 591

AUTHOR Quigley, Benjamin Allan
TITLE The Canadianization of the GED. The History and Development of the General Educational Development Testing Program in Canada. Occasional Paper, Number 1.
INSTITUTION American Council on Education, Washington, D.C. General Educational Development Testing Service.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-8268-1207-2
PUB DATE Jan 87
NOTE 18p.; Based on doctoral research supported by the Saskatchewan Department of Advanced Education and Manpower.
AVAILABLE FROM GED Testing Service, American Council on Education, One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 20, Washington, DC 20036 ($5.00).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; Developed Nations; *Educational Development; *Educational History; Foreign Countries; *High School Equivalency Programs; Program Development; Test Construction; *Testing Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Canada; *General Educational Development Tests

ABSTRACT

Eight provinces and two territories have built a Canadian General Educational Development (GED) testing program. The Canadian GED program has a number of major Canadian characteristics that have evolved due to a certain inner logic set in motion as the provinces and territories joined the GED program. In order, these provinces and territories have joined the GED program: Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island, Manitoba, New Brunswick, British Columbia, Newfoundland, Labrador, Northwest Territories, Yukon Territory, and Alberta. Six salient Canadian characteristics have come to make this a Canadianized program in content, delivery, and Canadian regulatory policies: use of grade levels, centralization, consistent passing levels, French testing, Canadian social studies, and metrication. These six characteristics have created a Canadian GED program that is Canadian in content with Canadian social studies and metrication, Canadian in form with French GED, and Canadian in terms of delivery arising from higher pass levels and in terms of a long tradition of centralization and standardization in provinces/territories as compared to the United States. (YLB)

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"THE CANADIANIZATION OF THE GED"

THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TESTING PROGRAM IN CANADA

Benjamin Allan Quigley

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GED TESTING SERVICE
OCCASIONAL PAPER, NUMBER 1
JANUARY 1987

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION
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The American Council on Education, founded in 1918, is the major voice in American higher education and serves as the locus for discussion and decision-making on higher education issues of national importance. As such, it strives to ensure quality education on the nation's campuses.

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The GED testing program began in 1942 with the development of a battery of tests for United States military personnel who had not completed their high school studies. Today, through the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education, the tests are administered in all fifty states, in many Canadian provinces, and in the U.S. commonwealths and territories. The GED testing progrma has offered millions of adults a "second chance" by enabling them to demonstrate that they have many of the skills they would have acquired had they been able to remain in high school.

*Formerly the Office on Educational Credit and Credentials.

Acknowledgements

The project was made possible due to the cooperation and help of provincial/territorial administrators who reviewed data and shared information. These included, in particular: Turney Manzer, Nova Scotia; Ed Woods, Manitoba; Alan Taylor, British Columbia; Morris Treasure, Alberta; Sr. Margaret Kelly, Prince Edward Island; Cliff Penney, Newfoundland; Marlene Sudeyko, Yukon; Jim Walker and Sandra Thomson, Northwest Territories; and Fred Nakonechney, first GED administrator in Saskatchewan. Copies of original correspondence were made available through GEDTS, Washington. I would particularly like to thank Doug Whitney, who could not have been more helpful or more encouraging throughout.

I would also like to thank Dr. John Niemi, Professor of adult education at Northern Illinois University and personal friend, for contributing historical points and editorial changes. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the financial support of the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower of the Government of Saskatchewan for their financial assistance to my doctoral studies, of which this research paper was a part.

The opinions expressed in this paper are the author's, and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the American Council on Education.

Author:
Benjamin Allan Quigley, Ed.D, Acting Director, University Affairs Branch, Department of Advanced Education and Manpower, 1855 Victoria Avenue, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada S4P 3V5

Copies of this report are available for $5.00 (prepaid) from the GED Testing Service (Research and Development), American Council on Education, One Dupont Circle, Suite 20, Washington, D.C. 20036.

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ISBN: 0-8268-1207-2

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"The Canadianization of the GED": The History and Development of the General Educational Development Testing Program in Canada

GED Testing Service, Occasional Paper, No. 1, January 1987

Benjamin Allan Quigley

Although the General Educational Development, or "GED," program is rarely pictured or discussed in its entirety, if taken as a single program, it is easily one of the most uniform, most transferable, and most widely recognized of any adult education program in North America. Geographically, it extends from Alaska to Guam and Puerto Rico; from Newfoundland to Hawaii. It includes every state, every U.S. protected territory, eight of the Canadian provinces, and both of the Canadian territories. GED Tests are also administered on U.S. military bases overseas. Thus, the tests has few rivals in terms of sheer size and comprehensiveness within the field of adult education.

GED has provided high school equivalency certification to 5,666,009 adults in the U.S.A. since 1971, according to its first recorded data, and certification to 154,612 in Canada since its inception in 1969. Table 1 shows the number of people writing the GED Tests in Canada each year since 1979.

Today, the GED program provides a second chance to some 710,000 adults annually across the North American continent and abroad; 450,000 of these adults earn a GED credential annually. In fact the GED now comprises approximately 14% of all high school credentials used in the U.S.A. today. Yet, despite its remarkable geographic and numerical extensiveness, the testing standards and administrative policies are maintained centrally by the GED Testing Service, (GEDTS) of the American Council on Education (ACE) in Washington D.C. Adding to this North American level of standardization, most of the participating Canadian provinces have set the same GED XII minimum pass requirements. In Canada, most have set a minimum of 45 standard score points for each of the five tests—a passing score higher for an entire country than for any single state in the U.S. Those which have agreed to this remarkable level of consistency include: Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Saskatchewan. For an educator even to conceive of a single program with the same pass level, on the "same" tests, administered under the same policy regulations across Canada as well as the U.S.A. and its territories, is to conceive of an unheard of level of program acceptance and consistency. This is particularly obvious if one compares GED transferability to university degrees, vocational certificates, to basic education certificates or, of course, to the myriad high school diplomas across Canada—all seemingly entangled in a web of non-transferability and credit confusion—none of these easily transferable across the U.S.-Canadian border.

Given this level of consistency and extensiveness, it might be assumed that the GED program evolved in the same way in both Canada and the U.S. In fact it did not. Today's

Table 1. NUMBER OF PEOPLE WRITING THE GED TESTS IN CANADA 1979–1985

PROVINCE/ TERRITORY	YEAR						
	79	80	81	82	83	84	85
Alberta	*	*	443	2,288	2,897	3,095	3,391
British Columbia	3,928	4,749	4,924	5,068	4,250	3,965	3,300
Manitoba	1,641	1,629	1,771	1,866	1,359	1,506	1,575
New Brunswick	1,065	1,277	1,607	1,828	1,672	1,638	1,680
Newfoundland	1,099	1,381	1,521	1,540	1,541	876	730
Northwest Territories	118	141	96	115	120	86	122
Nova Scotia	1,856	2,530	2,847	2,519	2,730	2,041	2,641
Prince Edward Island	177	359	400	338	276	201	183
Saskatchewan	2,675	2,959	3,343	3,247	3,747	2,969	2,635
Yukon Territory	63	85	124	143	96	75	150
Totals	12,622	15,110	17,076	18,952	18,688	16,452	16,407

Note: Alberta began administering the GED Tests in September, 1981.

Canadian GED program has a number of major Canadian characteristics. Some of these evolved due to a certain "inner logic" set in motion by Canadian administrators and the GEDTS staff. Others, however, have arisen due to indigenous needs and values—due to the "Canadian condition." In either case, the history of the GED in Canada is surely one of the clearest examples of what can be achieved in adult education through bilateral Canada-U.S. cooperation as well as multilateral cooperation among provinces and territories. Yet, despite the success story to be told, neither the history of the Canadian program nor the details on how it evolved into a Canadian GED program has been written to date.

This fact may seem surprising, especially since GED is now forty-three years old in the U.S. and seventeen years old in Canada. But, as will be seen, it is perhaps more accurately described as "consistent"—consistent with an historical theme of quiet, pragmatic, yet determined understatement which characterizes both the history and the delivery of GED in Canada. As will be discussed, not a single province or territory engaged in "fanfare" before or after joining. Today, provinces only modestly advertise the program and are universally amused by U.S. marketing "gimmicks." Also to be discussed, every Canadian inter-provincial decision was taken or recommended from within government, without an equivalent U.S. blue ribbon committee study and without public studies or hearings. Throughout its history, as today, collective decisions were systematically moved through levels of government, through the Council of Ministers of Education, through federal offices, to an almost inexorable, "quiet" conclusion—always with a business-as-usual approach.

Research on GED in Canada, therefore, is a virtual anomaly—and sadly so. The GED is a unique program, one which has a great deal to tell the adult education community, including various levels of government and traditional post-secondary institutions across both Canada and the U.S. The following is a brief outline of the history of events which has provided a "second chance certificate" to over 150,000 in Canada. The discussion will point to six salient Canadian characteristics which have come to make this a Canadianized program in content, in delivery, and in Canadian regulatory policies. These six are: 1) use of grade levels, 2) centralization, 3) consistent passing levels, 4) French testing, 5) Canadian social studies, 6) metrication. It is these six, that give the most obvious differences with the U.S. and create a Canadian GED program today.

1. *Nova Scotia*

The beginning of GED in Canada was a matter of almost "underwhelming" significance. Mr. Turney Manzer, then Supervisor of Measurement and Evaluation in the Halifax Department of Education's Office of Pupil Personnel Services, contacted Mr. Cornelius Turner, Director of the GED Testing Service in Washington (then called the Commission on Accreditation of Service Experiences) by telephone. He received a follow-up letter from Turner on October 28, 1968. This constituted the first known official correspondence to Canada about entry to GED. In this letter, Turner said: "I cannot give you any positive assurance that the members of this Commission would authorize the use of the tests by your Department of Education, but I am sure they would be most interested in considering such a request" (personal communication, October 28, 1968). On October 30, 1968, Manzer wrote saying the Minister of Education for Nova Scotia had "recently announced the use of a High School Equivalency Certificate" (T.C. Manzer, personal communication to C. Turner, October 30, 1968). In less than six weeks from the first correspondence, Nova Scotia made its official request to join the GED program and Canada was part of GED testing on May 5, 1969. The entire process took one phone call and three pieces of correspondence.

Nova Scotia's primary reason for joining was prompted by the Canadian military, an interesting parallel with the U.S. which began as a test for military servicemen in 1942. In Canada's case, the immediate pressure was to meet the pre-retirement needs of naval servicemen who were about to embark on a civilian career. As Manzer wrote:

> The need (for a High School Equivalency certificate) has been especially felt here in Halifax as we have a large number of retiring naval personnel who have served lengthy periods here and are now being pensioned and looking for civilian employment commensurate with their training and experience. Most do not have high formal educational qualifications but their training has obviously improved their standing . . . we in Canada do not have suitable test instruments such as your GED tests to assess the achievement of such personnel and are very much hopeful that you will allow its use for this purpose in our province (T.C. Manzer, personal communication to C. Turner, December 2, 1968).

Nova Scotia signed its first GED contract August 1, 1969, and the first GED tests were held September 30, 1969 at the Nova Scotia Institute of Technology, still a test centre today. In September of 1969, exactly four certificates were issued. Thereafter, 152 certificates were issued in October, 146 in November, and 233 in December. The "peak" was reached for the first year in June of 1970 with 463 certificates being issued. The make up of the first groups was approximately 25% naval personnel, according to Mr. Manzer.

How had Nova Scotia heard of GED testing in the first place? Dr. A. S. McDonald, then Director of Pupil Personnel Services, had used the GED Tests in the USA. Also, Manzer had become familiar with the GED during his own Canadian military service and had been part of a 1967 Armed Forces team which had surveyed the continuing education needs of military personnel. In 1968, he helped survey commercial instruments for such testing and carried his experience on the GED to the Department of Education in Nova Scotia.

Thus, GED was effectively introduced to Canada by the resolve of two people: Manzer and McDonald. When asked if he ever envisioned this as the beginning for Canada, Manzer, in correspondence with the author, replied: "Yes, it was country wide in the U.S.A. and something similar was

needed in Canada" (T.C. Manzer, personal communication, May 19, 1985).

The first fees set in Nova Scotia, and in Canada, were merely $2.00 for all five tests. The applicant had to be nineteen years of age or older and one full academic year out of school. Also, the last school class which the applicant had attended had to have reached graduation to discourage the possibility of high school students simply dropping out to "short cut" high school if they happened to be nineteen years old. Applicants also had to have been residents of Nova Scotia for at least six months. Further, according to the earliest proposed eligibility guidelines, applicants had to be "especially qualified by reason of experience and/or special activities and (had to) present acceptable proof of such experience" (T.C. Manzer, personal communication to C. Turner, December 2, 1968). Passing levels were 35 standard score points on each test and an average of 45 overall for GED XII. Pass levels, as mentioned, have since climbed for XII passing to a standard 45 per test within most participating provinces.

Canadian Characteristic # 1, Grade Level Equivalents

Nova Scotia introduced what might be considered the first of six "Canadian characteristics" of GED testing. Manzer and Turner developed a series of grade level equivalents for Nova Scotia comprised of Grades IX, X, XI and XII. This began a grade-levels feature of GED unknown in the U.S. even up to the present day. Today, British Columbia, The Yukon, Alberta, and New Brunswick have not used grade levels; Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, and the Northwest Territories use grade levels from IX to XI. Nova Scotia, and later Newfoundland, became the sole administrators of grade IX and VIII, respectively, and remain so today. In fact, the GEDTS later came to discourage the use of grade levels since high school equivalency, as GEDTS now points out, should mean the equivalent "sum total" of four years of high school. In the view of GEDTS, a single certificate should be offered for equivalent accumulated knowledge and reasoning skills, not for "parts" of such equivalency at certain, "arbitrary" grade levels. But, in the early days of Canada's GED, in an apparent attempt to accommodate Nova Scotia's desire to meet the lower than XII standards of licensing boards and vocational or technical training schools, GEDTS introduced policy #34 into their April, 1973 *Handbook of Policies and Procedures* (third edition). This policy (which has since disappeared) stated:

> 34. Policy: The Commission recommends that GED test scores be used for the following purposes:
>
> . . . 3 . By licensing boards, for admitting qualified adults to examinations for professions requiring completion of the ninth, tenth, or eleventh grades, using GED test scores that are equivalent at the levels of those grades.

According to Mr. Doug Whitney of GEDTS: "The scores Mr. Turner recommended for such purposes were, at each level, those which approximately 80% of the norming samples attained" (D.R. Whitney, personal communication, April 30, 1985).

Thus, Manzer and Turner introduced what has come to be an exclusive "Canadian" feature of the GED for the majority of participating provinces and territories. GEDTS came to discontinue gathering lower grade normative data; yet, as Whitney notes in his correspondence: "GEDTS . . . has made no effort to get the participating provinces to drop these designations." The decision (and justification) for lower-grade certificates has ultimately been left up to the provinces/territories involved. Today some provinces argue that grade levels are incentives for adults to rewrite and "try for a XII." They also argue that lower grade levels are all that is required for certain jobs or schools and a XII alone is both unrealistic and restrictive. But, those provinces which do not subscribe to grade levels point out that there is no real norm-referenced data for such certificates and, therefore, the true equivalency value is suspect at best. There will probably never be accord on the grade levels issue within Canada. Both will argue their position based on historical precedent, and, effectively, will be arguing the 1968 decision made by Manzer and Turner.

Canadian Characteristic # 2, Centralization of Testing Centres

While the first Canadianization characteristic already discussed, grade levels, was an administrative decision begun with Manzer and McDonald's perceived needs in Nova Scotia, the next two characteristics arose out of what is termed here as "the Canadian condition"—decisions based on integral aspects of Canadian government and society, thus more indigenous in nature.

Looking first at the centralization of testing centres, as Whitney explained in correspondence to the author: "In the States, GEDTS contracts with and ships materials to each local testing center (approximately 2700 at present). In Canada, however, the contracting and shipping arrangements are made with the (provincial) ministries" (D.R. Whitney, personal communication, April 30, 1985). Since the GEDTS preference would have been to deal with each test center, as in the U.S., and unsure of how or why centralization in each province developed, Whitney simply notes: "As I recall, in the face of determined opposition at the 1979 meeting in Victoria, we settled for a system involving a continuation of central contracting and shipping with the ministries but with GEDTS notified of the names and addresses of local tests centers and administrators."

To explain why this difference has evolved is almost as difficult as explaining the differences between Canadian federalism and its centralization bias and American republicanism with its decentralization approach. Each province's centralized control of province-wide regulations and policies is a legislative tradition modelled on national federal policies which, in turn, are founded on British parliamentary and legislative procedures. From the early North West Mounted Police to today's Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, centralization through federalism is a way of governing and a way

of overcoming large distance to provide equitable governmental services. The idea of hundreds of local test sites, each contracting with GEDTS, was simply not acceptable in Victoria in 1979, and would undoubtedly be unacceptable today for the same reasons in Canada.

On the other hand, while theoretically attractive to many U.S. administrators, such a level of centralization would be considered "intrusive" in the U.S. "Conformity" is not a desirable goal for most U.S. administrators. If one country seeks social orderliness and central governance, the other seeks individualism and local decision-making. The proof of this is at the annual joint meeting of U.S. and Canadian administrators. From personal experience, while each group is interested in the other's delivery mechanisms, the two sets of administrators can just barely picture, or accept, how the system works on each side of the border. It is rather like listening to someone describe problems arising when attempting to drive on the left side of the road in their country. Each sees the other as engaged in a curious deviation from the "norm" and the "logical" way to do things. The two countries are simply different, fundamentally, on centralization. GED is a manifestation of this fact.

Canadian Characteristic # 3, High School Equivalency Levels

Norming surveys conducted across Canada and the U.S. by Educational Testing Services, Princeton, N.J. for the GEDTS have invariably found that grade XII high school students in Canada score higher on the given tests than U.S. grade XII students. This is true on the same GED tests under the same test conditions, with the same randomization of candidates conducted in the same time frame in Canada and the U.S. by ETS. Logically, this means, for purposes of the GED program, that Canadian XII GED minimum pass levels have had to have been set higher than U.S. XII GED pass levels in almost all provinces/territories. When a U.S. XII graduate brings his or her certificate to most Canadian provinces and the territories, it is usually evaluated as worthy of a lower grade level certificate—at least in provinces/territories where lower grade certificates are available. In Alberta or B.C., a XII based on a lower U.S. pass mark would simply not be equivalent to their single high school equivalency certificate.

The fact that upwards of 78% of Canadian adults pass GED at this higher XII level suggests that it is not only Canadian grade XII high school students who are able to achieve higher standings in the GED than their U.S. counterparts. Adults score higher too. Further, since standardized exams are not widely used in Canada (e.g., the SAT, the GRE, etc.), it would not be accurate to suggest that Canadian high school students and adults are more "test-wise" than U.S. high school students or U.S. adults. For reasons that may arise from the schooling systems in the two countries, the "Canadian condition" is that Canadian high school students and adults do score higher than their U.S. counterparts on this standardized test. Thus, as concluded by U.S.-based norming surveys and confirmed through years of administration of GED in Canada, Canadian GED passing standards are higher across the board than in the U.S. because the high school students score higher, as do the adults.

The early impact of higher pass levels on the GEDTS is worth mentioning, particularly since it relates to the archetypal Canada-U.S. differences in their view to uniformity. Cornelius Turner, the first Director of GEDTS, wrote Russell M. Ewing, the Director of Elementary and Secondary Education in Prince Edward Island, asking that P.E.I. consider lowering their pass marks. As he wrote: "Another policy requirement which should be considered concerns unusually high minimum score requirements for issuance of the certificate." Mr. Turner explained:

> It is difficult for a state to justify minimum score requirements which are higher than a standard score of 35 on each test *and* an average standard score of 45 on all five tests; or a standard score of 40 on each test *or* an average score of 45 on all five tests . . .
>
> The reason I suggest for your consideration the above modifications in policy is because at the Conference of State Administrators of the GED Test Program, held in Washington last June, (1971) there seemed to be a consensus that state policies should be more uniform than they have been in the past with regard to minimum score requirements, minimum age for issuance of certificate, minimage age for admission to take the tests, and minimum residence requirements. (C. Turner, personal communication to R.M. Ewing, August 19, 1971).

In later correspondence with Whitney of GEDTS the author was advised that Ohio and Iowa actually did lower their minimum scores in 1972. However, as Whitney also notes: "For whatever reason(s), this effort had been discontinued by the time the revised tests were introduced in 1978."

It seems that the theory of uniformity in the U.S. has had its attractions, as mentioned, but in practice American states were not prepared to implement uniformity on any of their own 1971 suggestions. Only Turner, acting on the apparent majority wishes of state administrators who later ignored their own proposals, attempted to carry this out, even if it meant asking a Canadian province to be guided by U.S. sentiments. Prince Edward Island appears to have tactfully ignored the request. As one may have anticipated, the request eventually lost wind within its own sails. It is, therefore, ironic that Canadian provinces and territories today, through collective administrator decisions, have chosen the very route abandoned in the U.S., and in fact have gone well beyond standard pass marks. Consistency on GED also includes today: standard fees (most at $10.00 for the tests); virtually standard age requirements at 19 years for writing eligibility (exceptions being Alberta and the N.W.T. at 18 years); and virtually all with no or minimal residency requirements. As with centralization of test administration, the Canadian tendency towards broad uniformity is a salient characteristic which arises from the Canadian context. It is clearly different from U.S. practice and sets the Canadian program apart for its own indigenous reasons.

To this point, then, administratively-chosen grade levels, indigenous high pass marks, and centralization constitute three of the six characteristics of Canadianization of the GED.

2. *Saskatchewan*

Saskatchewan followed within a year and a half of Nova Scotia's joining. The first inquiry was by L. M. Ready, Associate Deputy Minister of Education, who wrote Turner March 23, 1970. On May 4, 1970, approval to join was granted by the American Council on Education. This time the entire process for joining took exactly six weeks instead of Nova Scotia's six months, and set a "record" of brevity of correspondence. First was Ready's two-paragraph inquiry, the second was Turner's three-page reply, third was Ready's two-paragraph request to join, fourth was Turner's two-page reply of Commission acceptance. It took a total of six weeks and seven pages to dispatch the entire matter.

It is curious, perhaps, that Saskatchewan followed Nova Scotia—a prairie province which would seemingly have less contact with Nova Scotia than, for instance, a neighboring maritime province. In correspondence from Mr. F. E. Nakonechny, retired first GED administrator, he recalled that he thought Saskatchewan heard of the GED "primarily through the Council of Minister's Conferences" (Nakonechny, personal communication, May 22, 1985). As for why Saskatchewan was motivated to join in the first instance, he wrote: "Our Minister of the day, was from the East and therefore become enthused about this program." As he explained, the Minister of Education, Mr. Cliff McIsaac, "appreciated the problems of the thousands of adults in Saskatchewan who did not have the opportunity to attend regular high school and were therefore handicapped in advancing." Vocational schools set a grade X entrance requirement for admission to most programs.

The "thousands of adults," were not military, as in Nova Scotia, but, according to Nakonechny:

> Because of the high percentage of adults in the early '70s who were unable to obtain grade XII during depression years 1930s and war years the gov't [sic] of the day believed it would assist these people in getting employment, higher education and personal satisfaction if the opportunity was made available to them to obtain equivalent grade XII standing. GED was the only program based on past experience and self-learning to provide for such a possibility; hence, GED was initiated.

Thus, according to the first two GED administrators, the military, especially the navy, and the "dirty thirties" as it was called on the prairies, were the compelling reasons for beginning the GED in Canada in the Maritimes and Prairies respectively.

Saskatchewan conducted GED out of the Department of Education from Regina with applications being made available at the Department of Education or at its Unit (or Divisional) Offices. After a one-year pilot over seven discrete time periods involving 1,910 adults from November 1970 to October 1971 in Regina, Yorkton and Swift Current, Saskatchewan determined that 351 wrote for higher education access, 224 for job promotion possibilities, 119 for a change of job and 111 "other" (conceivably personal satisfaction). In 1970, 361 certificates were issued: 293 XIIs, 40 XIs, and 15 Xs. The entire program was transferred to the Department of Continuing Education March 31, 1975, and has since been conducted through the sixteen community colleges in the province with test materials held securely at the colleges. Tests are conducted in the college regions when numbers warrant, typically every month to six weeks in each region. The original test fee was $4.00, raised on January 1, 1985 to $10.00. The original passing requirement was 35 standard score points on each test, 45 overall for a XII—the same as Nova Scotia's minimum requirements. Adults, to be eligible, needed to be nineteen years of age, a resident of the province for at least six months and one full year out of school with previous high school not required, as per its first policy statement governing GED on April 15, 1970.

Saskatchewan, in short, has to be considered the "quietest" province within the leitmotif of a "business-as-usual," no fanfare, pragmatic attitude towards the GED in Canada.

3. *Prince Edward Island*

Third to join was the province of Prince Edward Island, so authorized on May 24, 1971 and beginning their testing program September 1, 1971. P.E.I.'s approval was somewhat delayed since, although their Minister of Educaton, Hon. Gordon L. Bennett, made P.E.I.'s original inquiry on March 17, 1971, the ACE Commission found it could not meet to decide on the application May 3, 1971, as planned, "due to [anti-Vietnam war] demonstrations . . . in Washington on May 3" (C. Turner, personal communication to G. Bennett, May 6, 1971). In P.E.I.'s case, the province learned of the GED from Dr. Arthur McDonald of the Department of Education in Nova Scotia (who was a former American), according to the present-day GED Administrator (M. Kelly, personal communication, June 27, 1985).

Prince Edward Island's motivation for joining was very like Nova Scotia's and Saskatchewan's, except that P.E.I. had a special interest group of teachers who had completed normal school, but had never actually been required to complete grade XII:

> We have, in the province of Prince Edward Island, many adults who have in the past not had an apportunity [sic] to pursue education to the level of completing high school. This circumstance has in many instances made it difficult for these persons to obtain promotion in work situations, and it has also made it difficult for them to pursue further training. (G.L. Bennett, personal communication to C. Turner, March 17, 1971).

After a committee review of GED, with representation from Holland College, University of P.E.I., and the Civil Service Commission, chaired by Mr. Russell Ewing, the GED came

to be administered by Mr. Ewing, Director of Elementary and Secondary Education for the Department of Education, and it was delivered through this same office. The eligibility requirements were essentially the same as Nova Scotia's and Saskatchewan's: nineteen, one full academic year out of school, plus the previous class of which the candidate had been a member must have graduated, precluding the possibility of one dropping out to write the GED. A residency of six months was required for P.E.I. and no previous high school was required, thus a pattern was being well established on eligibility.

Applications for the GED were made available from and were to be returned to the Adult Counselling and Testing section of the Continuing Education Branch of Vocational and Continuing Education. A six-month period had to elapse before rewriting. P.E.I.'s test fee was set at $8.00 with the minimum pass level at 35 on each test and an average of 45 in all five—a pass level which was becoming common in Canada.

Aside from P.E.I.'s evident tactful avoidance of Mr. Turner's request to lower their pass standards, their province's process of joining was basically quiet and "uneventful"—quite admirably so, given the potential hazards of trying to roll back pass levels at the request of GEDTS and a Commission based in the U.S.A. It is clear that both Saskatchewan and P.E.I. had taken a leaf out of Nova Scotia's book on eligibility since the regulations, even the application and wording of the individual requests, show remarkable consistency.

4 & 5. *Manitoba and New Brunswick*

Canada's next two to join were both granted approval by the American Council on Education on November 1, 1971. According to original correspondence researched from the GEDTS files, Manitoba inquired some months before New Brunswick. Manitoba's first inquiry was made on March 10, 1970 by Mr. L. S. Bennett, Registrar with the Department of Youth and Education, while New Brunswick's Coordinator of Vocational High School Education, Mr. E. S. Bradford, contacted GEDTS September 15, 1970.

Looking first at Manitoba, this province initiated a greater amount of paper flow than the previous two combined. First, L. S. Bennett, the Registrar, inquired on March 10, 1970 about the GED. Then, inexplicably, Mr. P. G. Halamandris, Director of Educational Research, at Brandon University, made inquiries May 13, 1971. He had no evident connection with the government or the government's inquiry at that time although, today, Brandon stands as one of the few universities in Canada to accept GED for entrance. Then, on October 19, 1971, Deputy Minister W. C. Lorimer requested information on instituting grade levels IX, X, and XI. Curiously, on October 20, 1971, the very next day, and well before Turner could possibly reply, Minister Hanushak wrote Turner requesting permission to join the GED program with the IX, X, and XI grade levels included. In so doing Minister Hanushak expressed Manitoba's motivation in joining, using precisely the same wording in the letter as was used six months earlier from P.E.I. (except for the addition of two commas and the correction of one P.E.I. typographical error).

> We have, in the Province of Manitoba, many adults who have in the past not had the opportunity to pursue education to the level of completing high school. This circumstance has, in many instances, made it difficult for these persons to obtain promotion in work situations, and has also made it difficult for them to pursue further training (Hanashak, personal communication to C. Turner, October 20, 1971).

Mr. A. Tingley was ultimately named the first GED Adminstrator.

Again, Manitoba expected candidates to be nineteen years or older, one full academic year out of school, their last class was to have graduated, applicants were to have been a resident of Manitoba for at least six months, and no previous high school was required according to Manitoba's September, 1971 policy. As in Saskatchewan, the fee was set at $4.00. As in all provinces to this point, passing was set at 35 on each test, 45 average on all five. Originally, GED forms were made available and accepted by the Research and Examinations Branch of the Department of Education. In May 1980, the program was transferred to the province's Correspondence Branch. This was due to a "change in administrative practice and convenience of program delivery" (E. Woods, personal communication, May 21, 1985). In fact, Manitoba is the only province today and, indeed there is no U.S. equivalent, which makes GED available through Correspondence.

Prior to regular testing, a pilot was conducted in Manitoba at Winnipeg's Red River College. As Mr. Ed Woods advised: "Twenty-three candidates applied to write the tests, 22 of them wrote and they all achieved Grade 12 standing. Eighteen candidates were male and four were female, . . ." The ages of the candidates ranges from 20 to 51 years with the greatest number (4) being 21 years.

The first GED tests for Manitoba were written during September of 1972, according to Woods, by a total of 495 candidates. Test sites were: Red River Community College, Winnipeg; Assiniboine Community College, Brandon; at Swan River; Dauphin; Fisher Branch; and R.D. Parker Collegiate in Thompson. Of those who wrote: 363 were male, 132 female—a reversal of today's student profile which is typically female dominated. Approximately 64.2% passed at the XII level, leaving 12 more achieving an XI and 6 with a X while 16 were unsuccessful in their tests. The largest age cohort was from 20 years to 28 years of age—slightly younger than the more typical 27 to 32 profile today.

The province of New Brunswick joined at the same time as Manitoba. In joining, it introduced what might be called the fourth Canadian characteristic of the GED progam. Like higher pass standards and program centralization before, this characteristic, too, derived from an indigenous Canadian characteristic; namely, the English/French populace and bilingualism.

New Brunswick became interested in the GED program due to Turney Manzer in Nova Scotia, as verified in their first contact with Cornelius Turner and GEDTS. In his letter,

Bradford asked to be forwarded a "specimen kit" in order that it may be examined. He assured Turner: "it will be treated with the greatest degree of confidence." (E.S. Bradford, personal communication to C. Turner, September 15, 1970). Of course GEDTS had to set their security policies aside to permit provinces to examine the tests, rationalizing: "the problem of adoption of the GED Testing Program differs from the problem in this country." However, the "specimen kit" was not returned as quickly as Turner had been promised. Four months later, Turner wrote Bradford asking, "whether or not your Department of Education has reached a decision . . . ." He added: "I shall appreciate it if you will return the battery of Form FF tests if you are finished studying it." (C. Turner, personal communication to E.S. Bradford, February 1, 1971). Bradford replied that the tests were now being studied by a committee "under the chairmanship of Mr. R. G. Harvey, Director of Guidance," and, in a tone quite casual in contrast to that of Turner's, added that Turner's concern and letter would be "passed along." (E.S. Bradford, personal communication to C. Turner, February 8, 1971). Although there never was a security risk in New Brunswick at any point (P. Kilburn, personal communication, October 14, 1986); nevertheless, concern was building in Washington.

Clearly relieved that the tests had not been compromised, even if the GEDTS policies had, Turner wrote: "If your Department is actively studying the Form FF battery which I sent to them and wishes to retain it until they finish their study of a new policy, they may do so" (C. Turner, personal communication to E.S. Bradford, February 15, 1971) a mild rebuke which evidently went unnoticed given that New Brunswick had not actually bothered to seek such permission. However, over six more months went by with no further word from New Brunswick, and no returned tests. New Brunswick had been "studying them" now for almost a full year. Vexed and in an uncharacteristic tone, Turner tried again and outlines all of the background correspondence and commitments past. He curtly outlines a new set of Commission meeting dates, closing his letter: "If your Department is not planning to establish an equivalency testing program, I would appreciate it if you would return the battery of tests" (C. Turner, personal communication to E.S. Bradford, August 24, 1971). Turner, again, heard from Bradford that R. Harvey was chairman of the study commitee and again Turner's letter would be "passed along." But, this time, Bradford copied his own letter to Harvey, saying: "He [Harvey] no doubt will get in touch with you in the very near future" (August 30, 1971), thus pushing his colleague to get going on this matter.

The tests were not returned until January 1, 1972, a full sixteen months after New Brunswick had received them. The true problem was finally brought to light in a call from Harvey to Turner on September 15, 1971. GEDTS notes of the conversation indicate that Harvey "asked whether we [GEDTS] would be considering putting the GED tests into French since he said that their Province has 35 to 40% of French-speaking people." The file notes, which were evidently made by Mrs. Ida B. Meyers, Turner's secretary, contain the added comment: "Mr. Harvey assured me that the battery of GED tests which we had sent to him was being handled under secure conditions." Bradford and Harvey finally met with Turner in Washington during October of 1971. Evidently, and as agreed by Doug Whitney of GEDTS on this issue, it would seem they discussed the need for a French version of the GED and also discussed the possibility of the province of Quebec being involved in the design of a French GED.

Having put the wheels into motion for Canada's French-speaking citizens, New Brunswick applied to join the (English) GED services December 14, 1971 with a letter from the Hon. J. L. McGuigan, Minister of Education for New Brunswick (approval was expediently given by ACE on November 1, 1971 pending such a letter). This step was taken only after the Educational Testing Service and New Brunswick had established norms for New Brunswick. New Brunswick joined, interestingly, offering only a high school equivalency certificate, not the grade levels of other provinces seen up until now—a precedent to be followed by Alberta, British Columbia, and the Yukon. As Kilburn later explained in correspondence with the author: "It was felt that there was questionable statistical evidence, aside from chance, for the separation of grades. . . ."

Canadian Characteristic #4—French Testing

The French version of the GED was developed from the fall of 1972 through to the fall of 1974 at a cost of $160,810 (U.S.), paid by New Brunswick who, in turn, received 50% of the cost reimbursed by the Canadian Department of the Secretary of State. Two batteries ("test sets") of the GED were developed by the Educational Testing Service under contract with the American Council on Education. The French context used was Canadian, using Quebec grade XII students only with Ontario and New Brunswick French-speaking high schools. Just as the Spanish version of the GED was developed in Puerto Rico, the French version was created where there was a sizeable language populace. Ironically, since 1983 when New York state began using the French tests, the French tests have come to be used to a greater extent in the U.S. than in Canada.

The original intent in designing the French tests, clearly, was to serve Canada and base the test on Canada. As explained by Mr. John V. Moe, Program Director for ETS in a proposal developed for and presented to ACE:

> it is proposed that the GED-F [French] be designed primarily for use in Canada. Canada has a well organized French-Language educational system, with an established curriculum to which the GED-F can be related. Of course, it follows that there are large numbers of high school seniors on whom to standardize the tests (J.V. Moe, personal communication to GEDTS, August 30, 1972)

The GED-F tests were ready by the fall of 1974. Despite apparent hopes, Quebec (and Ontario) were not enticed by the French tests to join the program at that time and have not joined to the time of writing. The upshot of this disap-

pointment was that many more French tests were printed than actually needed, or could ever be used, despite being used since by countries such as Haiti.

The social studies portion of the GED-F, incidentally, was in fact a Canadian-based test (raising obvious questions about their applicability in countries such as Haiti). This was the first of the Canadianized social studies tests and a forerunner of the fifth Canadian characteristic: the need for an English Canadian social studies test. This issue was to be addressed in 1976–77 by the Canadian administrators, GEDTS and the Educational Testing Service, as will be discussed. But, first two more provinces were to join.

6. *British Columbia*

Prior to joining the GED program, B.C. conducted an exploratory meeting in April, 1969. A number of adult educators were assembled by the B.C. ministry, including Dr. John Niemi of the University of British Columbia, Bill Dayd and Al Coulson, both public school adult educators. A commitee was struck and, ultimately, a pilot conducted in the penitentiary at New Westminister to an all-male group. During this period, Dr. Niemi published an article on the appropriateness of the GED for Canada, "Why the GED?", in the Canadian Association for Adult Education's journal of that time, *Continuous Learning* during November-December 1970. In this, he addressed a number of timely questions "left unanswered" (p. 201) by the committee in their early meetings. The questions he raised, and answered, were:

> (1) Why the GED? (2) What is the GED? (3) How it is used? (4) Is it a reliable and valid test? (5) Can it be used by the adult for college entrance? (6) Does it have any other value to the adult or the community? (7) Could it be adopted in Canada? (p. 201)

As a well known adult educator (even in 1970), Dr. Niemi's experience with GED testing at Fort Richardson, Alaska was recounted together with a thorough discussion of the history and objective reliability/validity of the tests. It is of course impossible to know the extent of this article's impact, but it would have undoubtedly been influential among adult educators and governmental decision-makers. In this early scholarly article on GED, he makes the following argument:

> In viewing the 1961 census reports, we find that 5,166,346 people over the age of 15, or 47 percent of them do not have a high school education. We cannot afford to ignore the needs of this group. It is true that our present evening school programs provide some opportunities for some of these people—but what about the individual who works on a swing shift, or who travels extensively? What about the men and women living in remote areas of Canada? And what about the general population to whom the G.E.D. would offer the chance to demonstrate their informal learning? (p. 204)

Two years later, the first official inquiry by B.C. to Mr. Cornelius Turner was made by Mr. H.C.D. Chalmers on December 11, 1972 in his capacity as Assistant Director of Examinations Division of Instructional Services. The use of GED was announced in the B.C. legislature February 14, 1973. ACE authorized B.C. to join April 30, 1973, and the first contract was signed by Deputy Minister J. Phillipson.

It is obvious that B.C. was also influenced by Nova Scotia. Chalmers said to Turner in his correspondence of December 11, 1972: "We are investigating the use of standardized tests such as are being used in Nova Scotia in their High School Equivalency Program." In fact the entrance of B.C. brought with it the highest pass standards thus far, a score of 40 standard score points on each test, an average of 45 on all five. Mr. Alan Taylor, the GED Administrator at the time of writing, has advised that a number of the first students to write were doing so to gain entrance to the University of Victoria (A. Taylor, personal communication, May 28, 1985) which chose to accept GED early in the history of GED in B.C. Together with UBC and Brandon University, it is one of the few universities accepting GED today.

Chalmers apparently chose to deviate from the use of grade levels as had been the broad Canadian pattern to that point—a policy which Niemi argued against. Taylor and his staff have observed the GED was originally designed to test the *residual* knowledge and skills of grade XII students and then apply such equivalency standards to adults. As a long-time member of the B.C. GED staff put this when asked why they had not used grade levels like previous provinces: "because this was not the real reason for using the GED" (A. Taylor, personal communication, May 28, 1985).

B.C.'s delivery of GED began in July, 1973. From the first round of tests in a B.C. penitentiary, B.C.'s program has since grown to become the second largest testing program in Canada on the basis of volume, with Saskatchewan third in volume (Alberta is first).

The early writing regulations in B.C. were patently similar to the preceding provinces, even if the higher pass marks on a XII-only program was a major change from the pattern as set so far. Candidates were to be nineteen and one academic year out of school with the last class having graduated; a resident of six months, and were charged a fee of $5.00. The rewriting policy was to enroll in and satisfactorily complete a course or courses and retake the GED Tests at the next test sittings; or "wait a year before again becoming eligible for testing" (first B.C. policy, not dated within 1973).

7. *Newfoundland and Labrador*

Mr. Turney Manzer had been instrumental in bringing the GED Tests to Nova Scotia, and he played a key behind-the-scenes role thereafter as well for other provinces. He advised New Brunswick directly, influenced P.E.I.'s joining and, as is evident from correspondence shared with the author by the Newfoundland Administrator, Mr. Cliff Penney, he came to play an important part in Newfoundland's decision as well. Penney first wrote Nova Scotia on August 24, 1972 and was ultimately referred to Manzer by Mr. R. Kane, the Nova

Scotia Registrar. Manzer advised Penney on where the GED was available, of the norms used, on how the tests were conducted in N.S., and of the fact that specimen copies could be obtained from ACE in Washington (T.C. Manzer, personal communication to C. Penney, November 21, 1972).

Penney followed up by writing to Turner on October 19, 1972. After an exchange of correspondence, Deputy Minister C. Roebotham wrote Turner May 31, 1973 requesting permission to use the GED. This was granted July 10, 1973. Interestingly, a mail ballot approval of the ACE members was used rather than holding Newfoundland and Labrador back until November when ACE had their regular meeting—indicating that the joining of GED by a Canadian province was virtually a "routine matter" by this point.

Since Newfoundland had no established XII program in the school system at that time, it established Canada's first VIII certificate, with IX, X, and XI as the full range of available certificates. The first GED sitting in Newfoundland was at Prince of Wales Collegiate in St. John's on January 18 and 19, 1974. Twenty males and 13 females attended the first sitting (C. Penney, personal communication, May 31, 1985). The first students were looking for a higher educational level for promotions, job changes and personal satisfaction from the GED. On March 15, 1974, Minister of Education, G. R. Ottenheimer authorized a full-page newspaper advertisement, saying in his correspondence to the Minister of Public Works and Services: "If the program is to be made known to the hundreds of Newfoundlanders who would be interested in it, we should give it all the publicity we can at the outset" which constitutes about as much "fanfare" as any province had indulged in thus far. Throughout 1974, 27 test sittings were held in eleven centres, from Labrador City to Gander, Corner Brook to St. John's. Six hundred fifty wrote the tests, 628 completed them, 468 or 74.5% received an XI diploma. The average writing age was 29 years and the oldest to write was 56 years old (who received an XI incidentally).

The testing fee in Newfoundland and Labrador was set at $8.00, a minimum number of fifteen candidates was set for a setting; the now standard policies of 19 years, six-month residency, one academic year out of school and last regular class having graduated were also used for eligibility. These had now achieved general consistency across Canada.

Canadian Characteristic #5— Canadian Social Studies

This brings us to the fifth Canadian characteristic of the GED. Of all the "Canadianizations," it was possibly the most significant of the entire list since it was the single largest departure from the U.S. program—namely, the Canadian Social Studies test. As Doug Whitney expressed it in correspondence to the author: "As early as 1972, reservations about using the U.S. Social Studies test in Canada were expressed." (D.R. Whitney, personal communication, April 30, 1985). The Canadian administrators' handling of this bordered on nationalistic chauvinism. The initial plan by GEDTS in 1974 was to revise social studies into a single test appropriate for *both* Canada and the U.S. Perhaps this notion was as doomed as comparing apples and oranges; perhaps it was naive in its underestimation of Canadian insistence that Canada is unique; or perhaps the Washington attempt to create a one-size-fits-all test for Canada and the U.S. actually meant a test that suited the U.S. mostly and Canada only minimally. In any case, as Whitney explained it: "When Canadian administrators reviewed these tests (during 1976 and 1977), they apparently determined that the original tests would not have been suitable for use in Canada." The reason chauvinism suggests itself is that this single "North American test" was entirely acceptable to U.S. administrators. Certainly there were many more U.S. administrators to satisfy than Canadian administrators irrespective of the content changes but the Canadians were intransigent on the issue.

What is clear from this, however, is that the Canadian presence in the program was now strong enough, confident enough, and obviously credible and large enough in the view of GEDTS and ACE, to lead directly to discussions on a specific Canadian Social Studies test. As Whitney expressed it, the Canadians' objections to the single test, "led to a 1977 meeting to ascertain which items would be used in Canada and to subsequent test development and norming work on the Canadian tests." Whitney adds: "By this time, I gather, Canadian participation (and "Canadianization") was so clearly established in our policies and practices that there was no reservation or hesitation about developing these tests." Interestingly, no state or U.S. territory has ever made a similar request. Illinois is the single state which *adds* to the five GED tests with a test of its own design on U.S. history and the U.S. Constitution.* Others have considered supplementing the five tests but none has asked to replace tests as Canada effectively did, according to Whitney.

Although the process of development of the Canadian Social Studies test is a topic which exceeds the scope of this brief history, it is nonetheless worthwhile to note the most salient events and decisions involved. A series of question items were arrived at out of a three-day meeting of administrators in December, 1977 in Toronto. A group of fifteen social studies teachers, curriculum specialists, college specialists and several GED administrators (*Final Report*, ETS, April, 1979) were involved in reviewing the existing American test to arrive at questions which could be retained or needed to be changed. Drawing on the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) library, six new forms of the Social Studies test were developed. After further review by mail and follow-up revisions, the test assembly and production took place in February and March of 1978.

The new tests were then piloted in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan, using thirty-two schools. A total of twenty-five of these completed the tests for a participation rate of 78%. Total students involved ranged from 899 for Form 1 to 433 for Form 6. In some cases, a full GED test battery was utilized; in others, four of the six social studies

*Effective July 1, 1986, people taking the GED Tests in New York State also must write an essay.

forms were written by students using a technique based on Youden rectangle concepts: "so that effects of fatigue, boredom and/or dropping out would not confound the data analyses" (*Final Report*, April, 1979, p. 11). Final reliability estimates of the grade XII scores ranged from .885 to .914.

By the fall of 1978, all test analyses, norming and equating were complete and the fifth Canadian characteristic of the GED program was introduced as a standard aspect of the English GED (French social studies having been part of the 1972–74 development of the GED-F series, as mentioned earlier).

A brief "footnote" to the Social Studies test is that the "special test series" for the handicapped in Braille, large print and on audio tape was not adapted but remained as an American test. Thus, the visually handicapped were "doubly disadvantaged" in Canada when it came to the GED until 1982–83 when Saskatchewan entered a contract with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) through the Saskatchewan office to the Toronto headquarters. Two Braille and audio forms of the Canadian Social Studies test were thus created, requiring some question item adaptation provided by the GEDTS. Although the large print series still remains to be modified, the GED is otherwise equally accessible to all.

8. *Northwest Territories*

The Northwest Territory followed Newfoundland in order of joining, applying for permission in September of 1974 and beginning delivery June 2 and 3, 1975. The N.W.T.'s first set of tests were conducted at Coppermine with five people writing. All received a GED XII. However, due to printing delays, the first five graduates had to wait five months for their certificates. The certificates were issued on October 1, 1975. Interestingly, N.W.T. was the only province/territory to add other grade levels later. According to Sandra Thomson of the N.W.T. Department of Education: "Effective April 1976 Grade X and Grade XI Equivalency Certificates were issued in addition to the Grade XII" (S. Thomson, personal communication, July 18, 1985). The first to write did so for the same reasons which have been stated earlier for other Canadian jurisdictions: two wrote for better job opportunities, two for personal satisfaction and one for purposes of higher education.

The original stated purpose for introducing the GED to Canada's North was again similar to those given by all other provinces but, in this sparsely settled region, one hears a special poignancy in the N.W.T.'s early policy: "The test is a means for an individual, not completing high school courses, to prove he or she has the equivalent or equal knowledge of one who did" (N.W.T. policy). The N.W.T. deviated from the preceding provinces in the age requirement, however, and set their minimum age at a low 18 years, a policy which stands today. Further, the N.W.T.'s minimum pass scores today remain lower than all provinces (except Newfoundland's which is exactly the same), at 40 per test and 45 average overall. The original fee of $5.00 remains unchanged at the time of writing as Canada's lowest. The fee is still forwarded with application forms to the Chief of Continuing and Special Education at Yellowknife, the capital of the N.W.T. Finally, the N.W.T. has never had a six-month residency requirement for GED in the Northwest Territories. Taken together with the addition of grade levels in 1976, these policies add up to the highest level of access for students in Canada.

The earliest decisions in GED were made by Dr. Echo Lidster of the Continuing and Special Education Division of the Department of Education, as well as by the first Chief Examiner, Mr. R. L. Simons and his successors, Mr. J. Angrave, Mr. F. I. Carnew, and Mr. R.J. Walker respectively. Today's Chief Examiner is Ms. Alana Jacobs with GED offices at Yellowknife.

9. *Yukon Territory*

The Yukon joined after the Northwest Territories, receiving approval in December of 1976 from ACE and beginning delivery on June 9 and 10, 1977. In this case, the primary reason for joining the GED was due to keen interest by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in the Yukon, which continues to accept the GED for recruiting today. The "Mounties" saw the value of the GED in recruiting local Yukoners and, evidently, so did the local citizens see a value in the program as well since the first test was attended by thirty-nine students. It was held at the Yukon Vocational and Technical Training Centre (today's Yukon College) in the capital city of Whitehorse. The Yukon, like B.C. and New Brunswick, decided to offer only a XII certificate. But, with respect to fees, the Yukon administrators changed their mind. Beginning with a comparatively high fee of $25.00, it was later reduced to $10.00, and is at that level at the time of writing. The first Chief Examiner was Hazel Fekete and the minimum age, unlike the N.W.T. "next door," was nineteen. A six-month residency was first required but is no longer observed today.

The Canadian bias towards consistency was recently reaffirmed again in the Yukon. Up until a May 1985 meeting of GED provincial/territorial administrators, the Yukon held their pass levels at 40 per test and 46 overall. However, according to an interview with Marlene Sudeyko, the Chief Examiner at the time of writing, the fact that all (except Newfoundland and the N.W.T.) pointed out that they were at 45 per test level encouraged the Yukon to raise their pass levels to 45 per test as well in order to achieve standardization across Canada. This policy has been in place only since July, 1985. Thus, today, every province and territory except Newfoundland and the N.W.T. has independently chosen to set a common XII pass level.

10. *Alberta*

The last province to begin administering the GED tests to date is Alberta, receiving authorization June 29, 1981. Alberta began its testing in September, 1981 with high school equivalency, or "grade XII" only and no grade levels. The Student Evaluation Branch of the Department of Education was the original office for program delivery. John A. Wood, Associate Director of Student Evaluation and Data Process-

ing was the original GED contact, with Dr. A. D. Marzolf the original GED Supervisor. Although the possibility of Alberta joining the GED was raised in correspondence between Turner and Bradford of New Brunswick as early as September 25, 1970, it was a full eleven years before they did so. According to Morris R. Treasure, Associate Director of the Department of Education's Student Evaluation Branch :

> There was a question of the need for an alternative way of showing an equivalent competency to earn a high school diploma. Until 1981 the argument was that there was no need for such an alternative. With the re-establishment of examinations for the high school diploma, the discussion was reopened and the decision made to offer GED as an integral part of the Student Evaluation Branch's program. (M.R. Treasure, personal communication, June 18, 1985).

Alberta's Department of Advanced Education and Manpower conducted a study of GED through a pilot at Grouard in Northern Alberta. The first regular set of sittings of the GED in Alberta were held December 12, 1981. A total of 434 students wrote in 20 testing centres across the province, 377 credentials (high school equivalency, "grade XII" only) were issued for 239 males and 195 females in an age range of 18—83 with an age median of 27 years. Students cited personal satisfaction or enhancement of employment opportunities as their reasons for writing, according to M. Treasure.

Although Alberta took the greatest length of time to join the program, by far, it is noteworthy that there is no evidence of one province or territory feeling "pressured" by another or being part of a "band-wagon syndrome" on GED. Each made an independent choice based on its own needs. But unquestionably, up to Alberta's considered decision, when a province did seek informal information, Nova Scotia was the primary source of inter-provincial "networking."

Canadian Characteristic #6— Metrication

The final Canadian characteristic to arise was requested by all of the participating provinces, including Alberta, in 1981 and 1982. This characteristic again arises from the "Canadian condition." Provinces/territories saw a need for including metric units in the Mathematics and Science tests since Canada was by then well along in its conversion to metrication. The guidelines for metrication in education as set out by the Council of Ministers of Education was forwarded to the GEDTS by Turney Manzer and, by the Fall of 1984, the Canadian series had the first two metric sets of tests in math and science. This was not merely an item-by-item conversion into metric; rather, it was the inclusion of metric nomenclature for original terms and care was taken not to affect the question purpose and content per se. As with the five earlier characteristics, this decision was taken and implemented quietly and systematically. In fact, metrication was included and being used in local test centres before some Canadian administrators and proctors even realized it. Certainly press releases and the like played no part in this characteristic—and so it has been the case throughout all five previous characteristics.

Summary

In summary, the eight provinces and two territories participating in GED today have built a *Canadian* GED program: in content; with Canadian social studies and metrication; in form, with French GED; and in terms of delivery arising from higher pass levels and in terms of a long tradition of centralization and standardization in provinces/territories as compared to states. This evolution and the "state of the art" is perhaps best reflected in a June, 1985 decision at GEDTS Washington to provide full financial support to Canadian GED administrators to enable, indeed "pressure" them, to attend and participate in the annual U.S.-based GED conferences. To further ensure that Canada is a full participant in GED policy decisions, GEDTS staff will not attend future Canadian counterpart "annual" meetings in Canada which had tended to make the U.S. conference redundant for Canadians. Instead, the annual, U.S. GED agenda is now enhanced to permit a Canadian counterparts meeting within the U.S. conference. Their role is ensured and; thus, Canadians have clear stature as a special group within GED.

This recent decision initiated by GEDTS is perhaps a fitting conclusion to the history of the GED in Canada. Turner's early letters to the first joining provinces often inadvertently referred to "state policies" and "states" when "provinces/territories" were actually being referred to. Today, GEDTS policy virtually insists that Canadian administrators attend and participate in U.S.-Canada policy. Significantly, this solid Canadianization process has actually "saved" the program in the face of internal opposition on occasion. For instance, in 1983 the Council of Ministers of Education for Canada discussed an agenda item on the creation of an exclusively Canadian written and administered high school equivalency test to replace the GED. The question was whether the "American GED" should be replaced by a "True Canadian" program. As one of the administrators, the author participated in a meeting of the CMEC post-secondary subcommittee in 1983 where Canadian administrators defended the existing program. Given the wide mobility and transferability of GED, the substantive research data base, its wide acceptance by employers and training institutions across Canada and the U.S., and the Canadianization of the GED as discussed here, it was a "no contest" debate. Sentiments that it would "be nice" to have our own Canadian tests were headed off by pointing out that Canada *does* have its own tests. The GED Tests are Canadian tests. The CMEC sub-committee dropped the bid for a new test at this same meeting.

If the history of GED in Canada tells us anything, it tells us that the Canadian contribution has been and will continue to be reasoned, courteous, and resolute in purpose. And, in its implementation, the Canadian contribution will continue to be quiet and professional. It is the author's conclusion that, ultimately, Canadianization is meaningful

only in terms of the credibility the Canadian program has achieved within GEDTS and ACE and among the many Canadian students, educators and employers alike who have received benefit from a Canadianized program. The fact that there is a Canadian GED at all is a further statement of the openness and flexibility of GEDTS staff as well—from Turner to today's GEDTS administrative staff—and a statement of remarkable wide-scale cooperation among administrators across North America.

In concluding, there was a time when GED was legitimately referred to as an "American testing program" in Canada. As discussed here, the accusation no longer applies. In fact, such accusers could well be challenged to find any adult education program in Canada which can come close to the Canadian GED for Canadian content, form, or policy reflective of the needs of Canadians in eight provinces and both territories. GED may remain the "unsung hero" of Canadian adult education, but it has never asked for more. It simply has gone about its business of assisting under-educated adults in Canada through the years and promises to carry on in the same modest, yet effective manner well into the future. Its recognition has come from those who have seen their lives change as a result of the GED program. Anything more would be entirely inconsistent and, one suspects, rather "embarrassing" for a program which, after all, was "only doing its job" in Canada.

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